

UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 373 431 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 25.09.2002

(21) Application No 0107177.8

(51) INT CL⁷
A44C 25/00 // A41D 13/08, A61F 13/10

(22) Date of Filing 22.03.2001

(52) UK CL (Edition T)
A3H H30X

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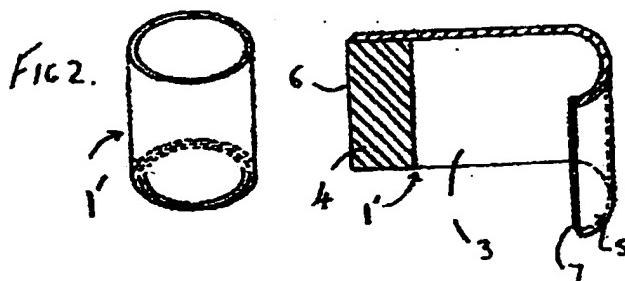
(58) Field of Search
UK CL (Edition T) A3H H30X
Online databases: EPODOC; WPI; JAPIO

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(54) Abstract Title
Jewellery protector

(57) A protective cover for an item of jewellery such as a finger ring comprises either a strip of material 1' with complementary contact fastening means 4,5 at opposite ends thereof, or a preformed elastic cylinder. The fastening means may comprise hook and loop material or a press-stud. The cover may be impregnated with a deodorant or a disinfectant.



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Fig 1.



Fig 2.

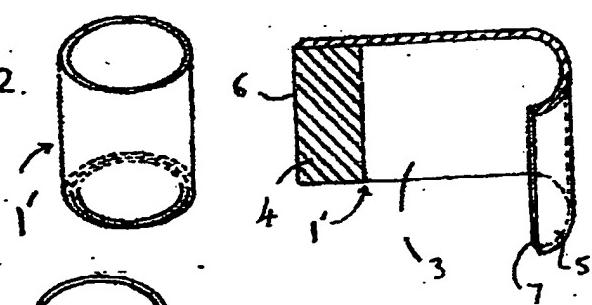


Fig 3

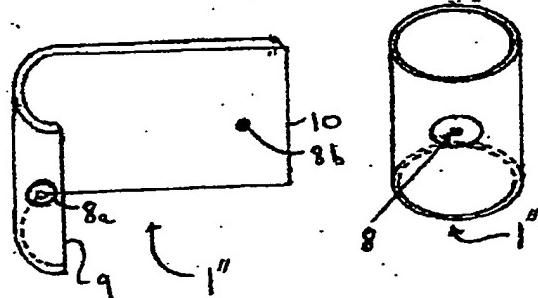
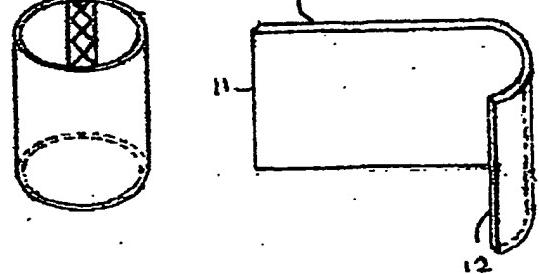


Fig 4



IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO JEWELLERY PROTECTION

This invention relates to improvements in or relating to jewellery protection and particularly but not exclusively to the protection of jewellery items (and/or of persons coming into contact with the jewellery) normally worn on the hand such as finger rings.

It is accepted that both men and women wear all types of jewellery but there are occasions when the wearing of jewellery tends to be problematical, for example, when engaging in various sporting activities such as football or the like and particularly in sports which are very competitive and involve physical contact. There are other environments where the wearing of jewellery may not be particularly appropriate such as various industrial environments or in the building trade or a medical or hospital environment. Problems caused by wearing jewellery in such environments include the risk of hurting or injuring other people where the jewellery might come into contact with another person or accidental injury to the person wearing the jewellery, and there may also be a hygiene risk for anyone involved in a medical or hospital environment or indeed even in the food servicing industry. Additionally, there may be a risk to damaging the jewellery itself or where, for example, a precious stone or stones are set in said item, loss of said stone/s.

Of course, it may be possible for a person engaging in a sporting activity or any other activity in which the wearing of jewellery might be problematical simply for that person to remove the jewellery whilst engaging in the said activity. However, the removal of

jewellery in such an instance might be inconvenient or not desirable by the person. Additionally, of course, jewellery such as wedding rings may, in fact, be very difficult to remove prior to engaging in the said activity and it is possible that a person might be disinclined to remove jewellery unless absolutely essential, and, in any event, said person might just simply forget to remove the jewellery in question.

In order to alleviate the problem to some extent, it is known to wrap, for example, a finger ring with adhesive tape or an adhesive plaster prior to engagement in the particular activity concerned but such measures tend to be disadvantageous for various reasons. The use of an adhesive tape covering the finger ring may leave an undesirable tacky residue on the ring when removed as well as being of unsightly appearance when covering the ring. Additionally, the use of adhesive tape in this way may be uncomfortable for the user more particularly where the adhesive tape may overlap the ring and adhere to the skin of the finger wearing the ring. Similar comments would seem to apply to an adhesive plaster. Such considerations may be very important, for example, in particular sporting activities such as women's tennis which might be televised and where close-up shots of the player are commonplace. Thus, a player may be considerably embarrassed by personal photographs taken of them wearing adhesive tape or a plaster or the like covering up an item of jewellery. Additionally, such adhesive tape or plaster may not, on a practical basis, be reusable at least not reliably or without becoming very unsightly. Also, as well as tending to be inconvenient and uncomfortable adhesive tape or plaster tends not to be waterproof or durable or applicable on the item of jewellery in a repeatable uniform or regular and even manner. Further, there is a likelihood that

adhesive tape or plaster might become detached from said item of jewellery during said activity (more particularly in a sporting activity where the user is likely to perspire from the area where the item of jewellery is worn or where said item and covering may be submerged in water such as in swimming).

It is an object of the present invention to at least alleviate one or more of the aforementioned, or other, problems associated with the protection of jewellery more particularly or usually when worn by a person during a particular activity.

According to the present invention there is provided a purpose-made protective cover for an item of jewellery such as a finger ring in order to protect/guard said item whilst being worn by a user, said protective cover being removable from said item and being reusable.

In one embodiment of the present invention the protective cover comprises a strip of material that can be wrapped around an item of jewellery whilst still on the user, thereby covering exposed surfaces of said item, said protective cover preferably including releasable fastening means, in order to fasten the cover securely on said item of jewellery.

The releasable fastening means may comprise a surface contact fastening means such as Velcro material or for example a press-stud, the mating parts of the releasable fastening means being located on opposite ends of the piece of material and being engageable with one another when said particular material has been wrapped around the item of jewellery in the correct fastening position.

Preferably, the protective cover is waterproof and/or durable and/or compact or non-bulky and/or uniform, comfortable and relatively unobtrusive when covering said item of jewellery.

The protective cover may be made from any suitable material or materials such as a Neoprene latex material or similar material or e.g. jean fabric (such as Denim), silk or cotton.. Neoprene latex is an extremely versatile synthetic rubber capable of resisting degradation from the effects of the sun, ozone or weather conditions. In any event, preferably the protective cover will be flexible and deformable with a degree of elasticity and resistance to tearing. Preferably, the protective cover will be resistant to flexing and twisting and return to it's original shape once the deforming force is removed.

It is to be noted that Neoprene latex material is used for the manufacturing of wet suits for divers and thus should not be a risk to damage of any skin parts of the wearer.

Where a surface contact material such as Velcro is employed as the releasable fastening means, the protective cover may comprise a durable, flexible material such as Neoprene latex as aforesaid and the surface contacting material could be fastened thereto by a (two part) Neoprene adhesive or a similar specification and/or by stitching (preferably a zig zag or overlocking stitch) and/or by any suitable means. Stitching may be accomplished with the use of a string polycotton thread or similar. Preferably, the thickness of the protective cover is within the range of about 2mm to 4mm depending on the requirements

of the user and where the protective cover is employed in the protection of a finger ring the width of the material strip may be in the range of about 20mm to 25mm.

Alternatively, the protective cover may be a preformed shape for example a tubular shape that can be passed over the item of jewellery (rather than wrapped around) so that the protective cover deforms temporarily whilst being located on the item of jewellery to wrap same in a tight manner.

It should readily be envisaged how a tubular cylindrical Neoprene protective cover may be slid down a finger and over a ring worn thereon to protect the same during a particular activity such as a sporting activity. The protective cover may be moulded in a preformed shape or may comprise a strip in which the ends have been joined together, for example, by stitching (in which instance said ends will normally not be releasable from one another).

Preferably, the protective cover will be aesthetically pleasing and may also have the secondary function of carrying an advertising symbol/s or indicia in order to enhance enjoyment of wearing the protective cover for the user. Advantageously, the advertising symbol/s or indicia may be theme-linked with the particular activity concerned for which the user requires jewellery protection.

The facility may be provided on the protective cover for interchanging the advertising symbols or indicia by any suitable means. The advertising indicia could simply be adhesive labels.

Further according to present invention there is provided a method of protecting or guarding jewellery, for example, during a sporting activity, said method including covering the exposed surface of an item of jewellery whilst still worn by the user with a reusable protective cover.

Further according to the present invention there is provided the combination of an item of jewellery with purpose-made protective cover that can be employed prior to the user engaging in a particular activity such as sport.

Further according to the present invention there is provided a plurality of purpose-made protective covers for repetitive items of jewellery, said covers being theme-linked to one another and/or a particular activity or team.

Coordinated sets of protective covers may be provided e.g. of different colours associated with different club colours of associated sports teams.

Where the user requires protection of jewellery in, for example, a medical or hospital environment in which hygiene is a very important consideration, the protective cover may include or be impregnated with a deodorizing or disinfectant or germicide material.

Many advantageous features of the present invention will be apparent from the following description and drawings.

Embodiments of a protective cover for an item of jewellery in form of a finger ring will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which;

FIGURE 1 shows a perspective view of a hand in which a finger ring has been fitted with a protective cover in accordance with the present invention;

FIGURE 2 shows schematically views of a first embodiment of a protective cover in fastened and in open positions;

FIGURE 3 shows schematically views of a second embodiment of a protective cover in accordance with the present invention in open and closed positions, and

FIGURE 4 shows schematically views of a third embodiment of a protective cover in accordance with the present invention in a finished format and just prior to finishing.

FIGURE 1 shows a view of a hand 100 of a user or person wearing a ring on the third finger protected by a protective cover generally designated 1 in accordance with the present invention. The protective cover 1, which completely covers the normally exposed surface of a finger ring, is depicted with an advertising symbol or indicia 2 that may be of any desired format in order to increase the aesthetic characteristics of the protective cover 1.

FIGURE 2 shows the first embodiment of the protective cover 1', which comprises a strip of Neoprene latex material or the like 3 of generally rectangular shape with strips of mating or complementary surface contact fastening means such as Velcro 4,5 located at opposite ends 6 and 7 of said strip 3 and on opposite sides thereof. Thus, the protective cover 1' may be wrapped around the exterior surface of a finger ring, in a manner which is evident from the drawings, and retained thereto by overlapping the ends 6 and 7 of the cover and engaging the surface contact fastening means 4 and 5 with each other, such that the protective cover seats securely on the ring gripping the surface thereof in a protective manner.

Once the user has finished the activity for which jewellery protection has been needed it is a simple matter to disengage the ends 6 and 7 of the protective cover 1', in order to reveal the item of jewellery, and the protective cover may be used over and over again.

As an alternative to providing a releasable fastening on the protective cover 1' in a form of surface contact fastening means such as Velcro, FIGURE 3 shows a second embodiment of the protective cover including a press-stud 8 having mating portions located on opposite ends 9 and 10 of the protective cover 1" in a manner which should be evident from FIGURE 3 of the drawings.

Thus, the protective cover 1" can be wrapped around the item of jewellery in similar manner to protective cover 1' and retained thereto tightly by overlapping the ends 9 and

10 in order to fasten the parts 8a and 8b of press-stud together in a manner which should be evident from the drawings.

FIGURE 4 shows a third embodiment of the protective cover 1". Once again the protective cover 1" comprises a rectangular strip of material such as Neoprene which has the ends 11 and 12 held together permanently by zig zag or over locking stitching in order to form a tubular cylindrical shape that may be slipped over the finger adjacent a finger ring and then suitably deformed whilst being pulled actually over the finger ring into a fully covering position.

In a further embodiment of the invention (not shown) the protective cover may be molded into a suitable shape, for example a tubular cylindrical shape, rather than comprising a strip of material which has the ends fastened together.

Any suitable indicia or symbol 2 (see FIGURE 1) may be applied to the exterior surface of the protective cover 1, 1' 1", 1", by any suitable means.

Whilst the invention has been described in relation to a protective cover for a finger ring, it is possible that the cover may be purpose-made to protect any item of jewellery, for example, a bangle worn on the wrist or an earring.

Additionally, whilst the invention has been described in relation to protecting jewellery whilst worn by a user such a protective cover may also or instead be used to protect the item during packaging or transport to protect the jewellery itself from damage.

Additionally, where the item of jewellery consists of, for example, a finger ring with one or more prominent, precious stones the protective cover may be provided with a recess or additional safety means to accommodate said stone/stones.

It is to be noted that when the protective cover is used on jewellery worn by a user it should not only provide protection against the jewellery harming another person or the user but it may also provide protection for the jewellery itself becoming marked or for example precious stones becoming dislodged and or lost from the item of jewellery.

It is to be understood that the scope of the present invention is not to be unduly limited by the particular choice of terminology and that a specific term may be replaced or supplemented by an equivalent or generic term. For example, the term 'protective cover' could be replaced or supplemented by the term 'guard'. Further it is to be understood that individual features, method or function related to the protective cover might be individually patentably inventive. The singular may include the plural and vice versa. Additionally, any range mentioned herein of any variable or parameter shall be taken to include a disclosure of any derivable sub-range within that range or of any particular value of the variable or parameter arranged within, or at an end of, the range or sub-range.

What I Claim is:-

1. A purpose-made protective cover suitable for an item of jewellery such as a finger ring in order to protect/guard said item whilst being worn by a user, said protective cover being removable from said item and adapted for reuse..
2. A cover as claimed in Claim 1 having a strip of material that can be wrapped around an item of jewellery whilst still on the user, thereby covering exposed surfaces of said item.
3. A cover as claimed in claim 2 including releasable fastening means.
4. A cover as claimed in claim 3 in which the releasable fastening means comprises a surface contact fastening means such as a hook and loop material.
5. A cover as claimed in claim 4 in which the releasable fastening means is a press-stud.
6. A cover as claimed in claim 3, 4 or 5 in which the releasable fastening means has mating parts located on opposite ends of the piece of material engageable with one another when said piece of material has been wrapped around the item of jewellery in the correct fastening position.

7. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims which is waterproof and/or durable and/or compact or non-bulky and/or of uniform width and/or thickness, comfortable and relatively unobtrusive when covering said item of jewellery.
8. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims made from a Neoprene latex material or similar material or e.g. jean fabric (such as Denim), silk or cotton.
9. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims which is flexible and deformable with a degree of elasticity and resistance to tearing.
10. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims which is resistant to flexing and twisting and which returns to it's original shape once the deforming force is removed.
11. A cover as claimed in claim 4 or any claim dependent therefrom in which the surface contacting material is fastened to the cover by a Neoprene adhesive or a similar specification and/or by stitching
12. A cover as claimed in claim 11 in which the surface contact fastening means is fastened thereto by a two-part adhesive.
13. A cover as claimed in claim 11 or 12 in which the surface contact means is fastened to the cover by a zig-zag or overlocking stitch.

14. A cover as claimed in claim 11 or 12 in which the stitching is of a string polycotton thread or similar.
- 15 A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims having a thickness within the range of about 2mm to 4mm.
16. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which the width of the material used for the cover is in the range or about 20mm to 25mm.
17. A cover as claimed in claim 1' or claim 7,8,9,10 when dependent from claim 1 which is of a preformed shape that can be passed over the item of jewellery so that the protective cover deforms temporarily whilst being located on the item of jewellery to wrap the item in a tight manner.
18. A cover as claimed in claim 17 which of a tubular shape.
19. A cover as claimed in claim 17 or 18 which is moulded in a preformed shape or which comprises a strip in which the ends have been joined together, for example, by stitching.
20. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims has the secondary function of carrying an advertising symbol/s or indicia.

21. A cover as claimed in claim 20 in which the advertising symbol/s or indicia is/are theme-linked with a particular activity for which the user requires jewellery protection.
22. A cover as claimed in claim 20 or 21 having facility for interchanging the advertising symbols or indicia.
23. A cover as claimed in claim 20,21 or 22 in which the advertising indicia comprises an adhesive label/s.
24. A cover as claimed in any one of the preceding claims including or impregnated with a deodorizing or disinfectant or germicide material.
25. A cover as claimed in 1 in which the protective cover is also or instead used to protect the item of jewellery during packaging or transport.
26. A cover as claimed in any one of the the preceding claims in which the item of jewellery consists of, for example, a finger ring with one or more prominent, precious stones and the cover has a recess or additional safety means to accommodate said stone/stones.

27. A purpose-made protective cover for an item of jewellery such as a finger ring substantially as herein described with reference to FIGURE 1 and FIGURE 2, FIGURE 3 or FIGURE 4 of the accompanying drawings.
28. A method of protecting or guarding jewellery, for example, during a sporting activity, said method including covering the exposed surface of an item of jewellery whilst still worn by the user with a suitable protective cover which is adapted for re-use.
29. A method as claimed in claim 28 and substantially as herein described.
30. A method of protecting an item of jewellery using a cover as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 27.
31. The combination of an item of jewellery with purpose-made suitable protective cover adapted for re-use that can be employed prior to the user engaging in a particular activity such as sport.
32. A plurality of purpose-made protective covers suitable and adapted for respective items of jewellery, said covers being theme-linked to one another and/or a particular activity or team.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Application No: GB 0107177.8
Claims searched: 1-32

Examiner: Brian B Caswell
Date of search: 19 April 2002

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.T): A3H (H30X)

Int Cl (Ed.7):

Other: Online databases: WPI; EPODOC; JAPIO

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
XE	GB 2362310 A (MORRIS)	1 at least
X	US 6023786 (BURNETT)	1 at least
X	US 5609165 (LAMBERT)	1 at least
X	US 4896378 (CAMPANA)	1 at least
X	US 2249550 (WILLIAMS)	1 at least
X	US 1885930 (LOWY)	1 at least
X	US 1533441 (MELLING)	1 at least
X	CH 597852 A (HYDAS)	1 at least

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